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DRIVER AND WELLHAUSEN

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More than two years have passed since Dr. Driver died (26 Feb., 1914), the greatest Hebraist of his generation, recognized both in England and in America as a master among Old Testament scholars. The time has come when we may attempt, more calmly perhaps than was possible before, to take a survey of his work as a whole, and to consider what are his permanent contributions to Biblical science.

Early in his career he won reputation as a grammarian. The word is indeed too narrow to describe the author of *The Use of the Tenses in Hebrew* (1874, revised and enlarged in 1881 and 1894); we should call him rather an interpreter of the genius and spirit of the Hebrew language. In this work, for the first time in English, appeared a treatment of Hebrew syntax which was at once philosophical in conception and ruled by the methods of scientific philology. Ewald, with a fine instinct for language, had formulated the higher grammatical laws, and Driver owed much to the work of his predecessor; but he developed it in a way which was altogether his own, with an accuracy and a wealth of illustration such as Ewald never attempted. Moreover he made a large use

of the comparative principle. Thirty years ago the value of comparative grammar was little understood; Driver was one of the first English scholars to apply it systematically to the explanation of Hebrew forms and usage. Thus the *Tenses* marked an epoch in the modern study of Hebrew; the student will always keep it at his side even after he has mastered its main conclusions. It is quite the most interesting book ever written on the subject, intellectually satisfying to a rare degree by its inductive method and combination of breadth with exactness in detail. It remains in many respects Driver's most original and enduring piece of work.

Along with the *Tenses* must be placed his *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel* (1887, 2nd edn. enlarged 1913). No better discipline can be recommended to the would-be Hebraist than to put himself to school with this book. He will gain a thorough grounding in the idiom of the language, and at the same time serve a useful apprenticeship in textual criticism. For the latter branch of study it is essential to know something of the external changes which the Hebrew text has undergone, and to illustrate these Driver introduces us to the fascinating documents of Semitic epigraphy. He also works out, with copious illustrations in detail, the canons which must control the use of the Versions as witnesses to an earlier stage of the Hebrew text than the Massoretic. His chapters on these topics have done much to lift textual criticism out of the region of guess-work into a system of orderly research. In connexion with his grammatical writings we may note his contributions to the Hebrew Lexicon, which he edited in partnership with Dr. Francis Brown and the late Dr. Briggs. Driver furnished the backbone of the *corpus*, the articles on the pronouns, prepositions, adverbs, conjunctions, etc.; he put into them his strongest work; they are models of lucid and exhaustive treatment.

Herein then lay his greatness. He possessed the genius of a grammarian, a sense of values in language. No one could speak with more authority when a question of exact scholarship was involved. It would not be true to describe him an Orientalist pure and simple; he had not the range of Nöldeke, for example, among the Semitic languages; but as a Hebraist he was unsurpassed.

It is significant of his general aim that Driver laid a solid foundation of linguistic study before he took up the higher criticism. He was grammarian first, critic and commentator second. And this was the order which he always insisted upon. A great deal is written upon Old Testament criticism, the text is freely emended, and metrical schemes are applied to poetical passages, by those who betray a very imperfect acquaintance with the original language. Both by his own example and constantly in his teaching Driver aimed at securing the foundations. Accurate scholarship must be the starting-point of all else; a great deal of patient drudgery with grammar, lexicon, and concordance must go to the making of a sound interpreter of the higher sense of the sacred texts. Such is perhaps the chief moral of Driver's life-work; may it long exercise its warning influence upon English and American students!

His mental habit as a grammarian may be said to have determined his method as a critic. He proceeds cautiously on inductive lines after a close observation of facts. He sets out the critical process in detail, tabulates the distinctive features of style and usage, and, where no certain conclusion appears to be possible, he is careful to indicate the degrees of probability; with a natural leaning towards a conservative position, he prefers to suspend rather than pronounce his judgment. It is these qualities of sobriety, common-sense, and fair-mindedness which have won for his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (1891, 9th edn. 1913)

a place of its own among the books most valued by the student. We may allow that the *Introduction* has its limitations. When it first came out it was regarded in some quarters as a compromise with conservatism. Thus a distinguished Oxford colleague, Dr. Cheyne, expressed himself dissatisfied; the author did not take sufficiently high ground; "an inspiring introductory book on the Old Testament from the point of view of the critic and a progressive evangelical theologian" was declared to be the desideratum. Yet the kind of work which Driver did was exactly the work required at the time; the preliminaries had to be made sure if the forward march was to advance in the right direction. And "compromise" is not the word to apply to his attitude. He always went just as far as the facts seemed to lead him. By temperament he was more inclined to secure the position already won than to seek adventures. His caution had its roots in intellectual honesty, not in fear; hence "there is no revolt from his teaching today, nor ever will be," to quote a discerning remark made about him after his death.

The truth is that his critical work was mainly objective in character. His strength lay in dealing with the facts, and so long as we can be content with these we find him extraordinarily satisfying. For example, he spared no pains to discover accurate information on the geography, the natural history, the archæology of the Old Testament; but when we look in his commentaries for inspiration or for vision we are apt to be disappointed. The latest theory, from which we hoped so much, is faithfully dealt with, and his verdict often acts like a douche of cold water to ardent spirits. He brings us back to the facts; no one knew better how to call a hypothesis by its right name. Yet it must not be imagined that he was incapable of appreciating the higher values. Those who have read his *Isaiah* (1888, 2nd edn.

1893), or the third sermon in *Ideals of the Prophets* (1915), are not likely to forget his description of the crisis in Jerusalem in 701 B.C., and of the part which Isaiah played; the description is none the less effective because it is conveyed in his restrained, undecorated style.

One of the aims which he kept constantly before him was to popularize the results of the new learning. He had no popular gifts himself, but he did his best to make known through the pulpit and the newspapers the teaching which he gave in his lecture-room and writings. Accordingly he never hesitated to engage in controversies, not from any love of disputation, but because he felt it to be his duty to defend the religious public from misleading views, and to encourage a sane understanding of the Bible. Moreover, as we survey his work as a whole, we cannot fail to be impressed by the convictions which lay behind it; they were never obtruded, but they colored all he did. He lived through a period of transition; and it has been mainly through his influence that the transition has taken place, with its inevitable changes indeed, but with a deeper insight into the religious significance and permanent worth of the Old Testament. There was a time when historical criticism seemed to threaten the strongholds of religion; Dr. Driver proved that, on the contrary, it is the trusty ally, the *angelus interpres*, of those who regard the Bible as the record of a divine revelation. We can hardly overestimate his services to the Church in England and America. "He taught the faithful criticism and the critics faith," wrote an eminent Jewish scholar.

Dr. Driver's active career filled the interval from 1871 to 1914. Almost exactly the same period is covered by the published work of Julius Wellhausen: his first book appeared in 1870; he celebrated his 70th birthday in May, 1914, and is now, we believe, enjoying a well-earned respite from the duties of his professorship. We

are conscious of a change of atmosphere when we turn from the English to the German scholar, whose influence upon the reinterpretation of the Bible has been equally far-reaching and even more creative. In the eighties and nineties he was widely read in England and America, and many younger men from both countries have attended his lectures at Marburg and Göttingen, and cherish a grateful recollection of his genial friendliness and of the stimulus that he gave to their studies. In Old Testament criticism his great achievement has been to establish, on lines laid down by Graf, the order and date of the documents which compose the Hexateuch, with all the reconstruction which this involves in our estimate of the history and religion of Israel. The classical exposition of his theory was given in *Die Composition des Hexateuchs* (1876, 1885, 2nd edn. 1889, 3rd edn. 1899), and in his historical treatises: *Geschichte Israels*, Vol. I, 1878, later expanded under the title *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*, 1883, 6th edn. 1905; the article "Israel" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, edn. IX, 1881; *Israelitische u. jüdische Geschichte*, 1894, 7th edn. 1914. The *Geschichte Israels*, Vol. I, when it first appeared, made a profound impression throughout Europe. Its main thesis that "the Mosaic history is the starting-point not for the history of Israel, but for the history of Judaism" was maintained by such powerful arguments that most of the leading scholars on the continent declared themselves convinced. The general movement of investigation had been converging in this direction. Wellhausen's position had been reached independently by Vatke, Reuss, Lagarde, Graf, Kuenen. The ascendancy of the last-named scholar was rising, especially in academic circles; but Wellhausen possessed the art of reaching a wider public. In Pfeiderer's words, "he removed Old Testament criticism from the rank of a subordinate question to the centre of theological discussion." He was fortu-

nate in securing a first-rate English translation of the *Prolegomena* by Drs. J. S. Black and A. Menzies, with a preface by Robertson Smith (1885), which thus carried into England and America the impression produced in Europe. It is a brilliant piece of constructive work, full of vivacity and human interest, and remarkable for its sureness of touch and for the directness with which it goes straight to the point; here and there, we must admit, it strikes English readers as wanting in reverence. The key to the providential course of Israel's history had been discovered, and in Wellhausen's hands it was used with masterful effect to open the treasury and let in the light for all to see. This achievement has stood the test of time and of repeated and searching examination. In details it has been modified to some extent; but in its main positions Wellhausen's theory has proved unassailable, and nearly all modern scholars start from it, the latest notable convert being Rudolf Kittel in his *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, 2nd edn. 1909-1912.

In England Dr. Driver did not at once declare his adhesion to the new school. With habitual caution he worked over the field for himself and slowly matured his judgment. He published in 1882 an elaborate article in the *Journal of Philology* on "Some Alleged Linguistic Affinities of the Elohist." It was a close criticism of Giesebrecht's contention that the language of the Priestly Code has much in common with that of the post-exilic writers. Driver did not attempt to determine the date of P; at the same time he conveyed the idea that, while accepting the critical analysis of the Hexateuch, he was not convinced by the Graf-Wellhausen theory. Yet he was steadily advancing towards it, as appeared from some critical notes on the Pentateuch, published in 1887 by Scribner's Sons, New York. In the summer term of 1889 he gave a course of lectures in Oxford on "the structure and origin of the Historical Books," and printed for the

use of his class a set of analytical tables to show the characteristics and arrangement of the various elements which compose the Hexateuch; these are all incorporated in the *Introduction* (1891). Here for the first time he made known his complete acceptance of Wellhausen's scheme, and set out in full the critical process upon which it is based. He was always attracted by Wellhausen's sanity and clear judgment. The *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel* owed much to Wellhausen's early work, *Der Text der Bücher Samuels untersucht* (1871), which at once raised the standard of textual criticism, not only in the emendation of the Hebrew text but in the critical use of the Greek Versions. It was here (pages 221-224) that Wellhausen first called attention to the value of the recension which is now generally known as Lucian's.

In the constructive work of Hexateuch criticism and historical restatement we see Wellhausen at his best. With a scholarship that can always be trusted he combines the imagination and large humanity of the historian who knows how to breathe a living spirit into the dry bones of the past. He has not the prophetic outlook of Ewald, nor Driver's sense of responsibility, but he surpasses them both in the breadth and originality of his work.

Old Testament criticism, however, is not Wellhausen's only interest; we cannot fail to be impressed by the comprehensiveness of his learning. In what may be called his middle period he devoted himself mainly to Arabic studies. He has thrown much light, in his series of *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten* (1884-1899, six vols.; numbers 2 and 5 deal with O. T. subjects) on the history and beliefs of the heathen Arabs. He wrote the life of Mohammed for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1883. Among other works, mention may be made of his important book on the fall of the Arab kingdom, *Das arabische Reich und sein Sturz*, 1902. In his third period he has returned

to a study which he took up in his earliest days, that of New Testament criticism, especially the criticism of the Gospels and Acts (*Das Evangelium Marci*, 1903; *Matthaei, Lucae*, 1904; *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien*, 1905, 2nd edn. 1911; *Johannis*, 1908). In these books he pursues fresh lines of investigation with the same independence and boldness as before, though his views have not met with the same approval. On several points, however, such as the significance of the title "Son of Man" in the Gospels, he has raised a discussion from which much has been learned.

Each of the great scholars whom we have been considering holds his distinctive place of honor, each has made his invaluable contribution to the study of the Bible; let us think of them as fellow-workers in the cause of truth. It is one of the most powerful bonds of union between men and nations. The highest interests of mankind are common interests; the *respublica litterarum* has its counterpart in the Universal Church. Divisions prevail in both; rightly regarded they do but give life and color to the unity which belongs to the inner constitution of each society. At present it is the divisions which loom largest. But we look forward to the time when, by God's mercy, the war will be over, and our fellowship in a common cause be restored, when the only strife we know will be a rivalry in great achievements and in the single-minded love of truth.